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The Indonesia Human Rights Campaign

MEMO

Briefing paper on Indonesia's elections in East Timor

On 23 April this year, elections will be held in Indonesia. This briefing paper is intended for those not familiar with the Indonesian electoral system. It will also describe some special features of the elections to be illegally conducted in East Timor, regarded by the Indonesian regime as its '27th province'.

The 1987 elections

The military regime has held three elections so far, in 1971, 1977 and 1982. No election was held in East Timor in 1977 although it had by then been forcibly annexed and officially 'integrated'. The first Indonesian election in East Timor was held in 1982.

The elections are being held for three assemblies, the central parliament (DPR), the provincial assembly (DPRD-I) and the sub-district assembly (DPRD-II). In East Timor, the 1982 election was held only for the DPR and DPRD-I. This time DPRD-II elections will also be held.

For Indonesians, this year's election are the first to be held after all political parties and social organisations were required to adopt the state doctrine, Pancasila, as their sole ideology. Only three officially recognised parties are permitted to take part, the government party Golkar (Golongan Karya or Functional Groups), the PPP (Partai Persatuan Pembangunan, or Development Unity Party) and the PDI (Partai Demokrasi Indonesia or Indonesian Democracy Party). But now that all three have been required to accept the Pancasila as their sole ideology, the differences between them have vanished. All three must accept and support government policy and refrain from criticising the government in any way. With the parties totally standardised, the armed forces now say that they will no longer take sides with Golkar. That being said, it is generally expected that Golkar will obtain a higher percentage of votes than last time round (62 per cent) and would regard anything less than 70 per cent as a setback.

Whereas in 1982 the East Timorese were instructed to vote for Golkar, this time round, officially speaking, no difference is apparently being made between the parties. It remains to be seen however whether the local election apparatus will steer the elections towards the same huge majority gained by Golkar in 1982. All three parties are historically irrelevant to the East Timorese so Indonesian officials appear to be concentrating on making sure everyone turns out to vote. Since anyone refusing to vote will be branded as Fretilin, a one hundred per cent turnout is a foregone conclusion. The military occupation forces appear to be so determined to whip up enthusiasm among the Timorese that some of their election propaganda has even been conducted in Tetum, a language normally held in disdain by the Indonesians.

Voting procedures

There will be 62 election committees (panitya pemungutan suara) in East Timor and the number of registered voters is officially said to be 357,754.

Special polling-booth arrangements have been announced for East Timor and for West Papua, the other territory where armed resistance against Indonesian rule is taking place. In December 1986, Interior Affairs Minister General Soepardjo Roestam announced that, unlike the 25 provinces in Indonesia where voters will cast their votes for each of the three elections in a single box

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for each assembly (a yellow box for parliament, a white box for the DPRD-I and a blue box for the DPRD-II), in trouble-torn West Papua and East Timor, there will be three boxes for each of the assemblies, one for each of the parties; hence, a total of nine boxes. The same procedure was used in 1982.

Voters in East Timor will therefore have to place their voting slip in the box for the 'chosen' party. This will make it much easier for election officials to keep a check on how people are voting. It will also eliminate the chance for voters to inscribe anything on the voting slips. Voters will queue up to vote and each person will hand in their 'model-C form' (a special requirement for East Timor), announce their name to the election committee official who will give the voter a yellow voting slip (for parliament) which must immediately be placed in a party box. The voter will then report for the next slip and repeat the process for the other two assemblies.

One can only speculate on the reasons for this procedure. Perhaps the authorities regard the West Papuans and East Timorese as being too immature to vote like everyone else. Perhaps this method will enable the authorities to guarantee that Golkar wins a comfortable majority as a sign that the Timorese accept Indonesian rule. Perhaps this makes it possible to announce the results fast. In 1982, the East Timor results were the first to be announced. Whatever the reason, Jakarta has shown that it regards the elections in its two colonial territories as needing far greater control and manipulation than elsewhere.

Candidates

The lists of candidates for all the regions were announced early in February. Top of the Golkar list for East Timor is Mochtar Kusumaatmadja, Indonesia's Foreign Minister. All regional lists are headed by so-called 'vote-getters', mainly cabinet ministers. The choice of Mochtar, a civilian, for East Timor suggests that Jakarta hopes to impress world opinion and maybe invite diplomats to see the man they know best 'win' a huge majority for Golkar. [The 'vote-getter' is not likely to occupy a seat in parliament.] The other four names on the Golkar list are all members of the present parliament not one of whom has ever raised a voice of concern about conditions in East Timor. Golkar 'won' all four parliamentary seats in 1982.

All five candidates of the PPP, formerly the Muslim party, have Indonesian sounding names while the PDI, formerly the conglomerate of nationalist and Christian parties, has put its secretary-general, Nicolaus Daryanto, as chief 'vote-getter'. By the sound of their names, two others are Javanese Catholics.

No doubt, East Timor will record as high a turnout as in 1982, when more than one hundred per cent of voters were recorded as voting, with over ninety-nine percent voting for Golkar.

Election and integration

In conducting elections in East Timor, Indonesia is contravening the UN Charter and numerous UN decisions. As with the 1982 elections, Indonesia intends to use these illegal elections as proof that the East Timorese have accepted integration by the mere fact that they took part (under duress) in the voting. Indonesian ambassador to the UN, Ali Alatas, recently claimed that the April elections will prove that "the East Timorese have recognised the fact that they are also part of Indonesia... and have really integrated

themselves into the Republic of Indonesia" [Jakarta Post, 11 February 1986.]

In a statement at the UN Human Rights Commission in February this year, the Portuguese government condemned the election and categorically rejected any idea that it could be regarded as evidence that the East Timorese accept integration.

Security during the elections

The offensive launched last year by the Indonesian army codenamed Operasi Kikis (Operation Extinction) was in part aimed at securing 'successful' elections. But in addition to the role of combat troops, there are several para-military forces consisting primarily of East Timorese whose duties will be intensified during the elections. These forces are collectively known as 'Hansip-Wankamra' and consist of five separate units: Wanra, Kamra, Ratih, Hansip and TBO. The first three are the ones likely to be used for security purposes during the elections.

Wanra (People's Defence) and Ratih (Trained People's Force) are under army control. Wanra functions under the command of Korem 164/Wira Dharma, the military command for the whole of East Timor, whilst Ratih functions under the 13 kodim or district military commands. Kamra (People's Security) units are attached to the police and were set up more recently than Wanra and Ratih, following the major military operations in 1981. During the 1982 elections, Kamra units were given special tasks in an attempt to give the police a more conspicuous role.

The present-day strength of these units is not known, but figures for 1982 became available in a set of Indonesian military documents captured by Fretilin on 28 August 1983: Kamra - 4,800, Ratih - 7,800 and Kamra - 1,690, for a total of 14,290 men. Although some members of these units are known to have defected to Fretilin in 1983, it is not unlikely that all three units have increased in number.

The use of these special para-military forces during the elections is confined to East Timor and West Papua. In Indonesia itself, security round the polling-booths is largely left to the police and the Hansip (Civil Defence).

The Governorship

There is frequent reference in the Indonesian press to the fact that the term of the governor of East Timor, Mario Carrascalao, will expire on 29 September 1987. Since his appointment by Suharto in 1982, he has served the purposes of the military regime well though he has made himself rather unpopular in some military and bureaucratic circles for his public attacks on corruption. There is no hint as yet that he is about to be replaced.

Sources: Surabaya Pos, 21 November 1986
Kompas, 22 January 1987
Berita Buana, 3 February 1987
Jakarta Post, 11 February 1987
Army Instruction No. Insop/03/II/1982 on Trained People's Defence.

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